

## A GRAND HAITI DEBT

### Shocking truth behind the west's 'rescue'

Even if a promised \$100m emergency 'loan with strings' to earthquake-shattered Haiti is offered as a grant instead, the country is set to be crippled indefinitely by exploitative international debt policies.

Plans to link financial aid both past and future to neo-liberal reforms and the permanent insertion of western interests into the Haitian economy have been condemned by groups such as Jubilee USA and One International.

Activists argue funds should be string-free and concentrate on helping the country get itself back on its feet, with final cancellation of its \$1.9bn debt being top priority rather than the provision of further loans.

While Haiti was acknowledged as being eligible for debt relief in 2004, it has been contingent on the building of Free Trade Zones, minimal corporate taxation and changes to its privatised education policies.

As a result of these policies, while Haiti will now have its \$1.2bn pre-2004 debts removed, the country's catastrophic rise in debts from the last five years of IMF policy-making will remain.

Effectively, the west has offered to forget about the money stolen by the US-backed

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### LENS CAP LIGER, LIGER, LIGER



We rarely get to do shock horror exposés of other papers' misrepresentations of the truth, but we could not let the subtle deception on page 3 of London's *Metro* of 28th January go unmarked. As you can see, the Liger, though undoubtedly big, is getting some vertical assistance from the mound of soil at his feet. By cutting off the bottom of the picture this is disguised. Such are the evil machinations of capitalist news.

## FOOTIE FANS IN REVOLT

Fans of Manchester United stepped up their campaign against the club's corporate owners who have continued to borrow heavily against the premier league team, taking it to the verge of financial collapse.

More than 300 angry Man U fans attended a joint meeting between the independent supporters association and the Supporters Trust, a grassroots body fighting for the fan ownership of the club, to oust the current owners, American businessman Malcolm Glazer and his family. Since taking control in 2005, Glazer has saddled the club with a massive debt of over £720m, including interest repayments of £60 million a year, and is in the process of borrowing a further £504m, fuelling fears the club has no money left.

More militant protestors have taken the

campaign to the terraces. Season ticket holders were beaten by stewards and forcibly removed from the ground during a match with Burnley for unfurling a 'Love United Hate Glazer' banner. The home crowd responded by chanting anti-Glazer songs throughout the rest of the game. Fans have also started wearing green and gold on the terraces, a nod to United's original colours and working class roots when they formed as Newton Heath in 1878 as the works team of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway depot in North Manchester.

There is upsurge unrest amongst ordinary supporters, increasingly angered by the way multi-millionaire club owners are using the loyalty of fans and the brand name of major league clubs to create massive debts and fuel their personal fortunes.

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## NEWS

### IN BRIEF

**POLICE:** Scotland Yard in London is spending £22,000 buying upgraded identification badges for all public order officers. The embroidered epaulettes will be issued to more than 8,000 specially-trained officers across the capital. Among them are members of the Territorial Support Group, dog handlers and some borough officers.

The move follows a wave of criticism in the wake of the G20 demonstrations last April of officers failing to wear identification markings.

It stopped short of upgrading identification badges for every officer, which would come with an estimated bill of up to £500,000 over four years. That's £17 per Met officer or two years of the Commissioner's salary.

**DANGEROUS WORK:** Two workers have been killed after falling from the Forth Bridge and the Tay Rail Bridge in separate incidents.

A member of the Forth Bridge painting team, who fell about 150ft from a ladder at 9.00pm on 27th January, was pronounced dead at the scene.

British Transport Police (BTP) said another worker was also killed after he fell onto a ledge while working on the Tay Bridge. The incident happened at about 6.40am on 28th January.

The first worker was killed when he fell from a ladder on the north side of the Forth Bridge onto scaffolding below the railway tracks.

**FULL SPEED AHEAD:** Toyota has announced the recall of vehicles in the US, Europe and China over concerns about accelerator pedals getting stuck on floor mats.

The firm has announced plans to recall 1.1 million more cars in the US a day after saying it was suspending sales of eight popular US models.

**TANKS:** In our efforts to try and keep our readers up to date with military developments, this from the top website Tanknet.

"With the first Arjun tank regiment completing its conversion trials, the Army is readying to test the indigenous MBT's mettle against the proven Russian T-90s in the early half of the year.

"Army is preparing for comparative trials against the Russian T-90s in the early half of this year ... before May," a senior Army officer said.

It was felt by the Army's Mechanised Forces circles that Arjuns could serve the Army only for about a decade as the technology and design of the tanks were on the verge of obsolescence already.

The Arjun project was approved in 1972 and the first prototype of the tanks was readied in 1982 and publicly displayed in 1995 taking nearly 37 years to have a regiment of the indigenous tanks since the project was approved.

Let's hope other military projects have similar delays.

### LENS CAP TESCO CHEEK



This is from the chain's supermarket in St Mellons in Cardiff. Not satisfied with ripping off their workers, customers and harming the environment, Tesco's decide to insult us as well.

## Community action against school closure

Parents from Wishaw, North Lanarkshire vowed to fight on against the impending closure of their local primary school despite being forced to end their occupation after threats by the authorities to send the pupils elsewhere until they left.

The five protestors, including four parents and one grandmother, took direct action as part of the Glasgow Save Our Schools campaign by occupying St Matthew's Primary, just outside the city, as a protest against its planned closure. They are angry at the actions of North Lanarkshire council who are seeking to sell off the site along with three others in the region.

Parents at the other threatened primaries – Belvidere in Bellshill, Gartsherrie in Coatbridge and St Francis of Assisi, Cumbernauld – have staged other similar protests. At the end of last year over 150 parents and pupils marched on the council's education headquarters, demanding council leaders reverse their decision to close Gartsherrie Primary.

Proposals to shut the four schools were drawn up after a report was presented to the

council citing falling numbers and poor building maintenance, but campaigners argue that the plans were based on information almost ten years out of date. One parent commented: "Our children are going to end up in overcrowded classrooms with poorer facilities ... We are not going to give up. Everybody in this community is 100% behind us and determined to save Gartsherrie."

Save Our Schools was set up in 2009 as a response to the planned closure and merger of 13 primary and 12 nursery schools in the Glasgow area, affecting more than 2,000 children, to save the council £3.7m from their budget, the very same amount, local activists argue, they plan to give private property developers (affected by the recession) to build on the school land. Previously Wyndford Primary School, and St. Gregory's have been occupied by parents and activists as part of the campaign.

Glasgow anarchists have played an active part of the campaign since the beginning, which continues to receive overwhelming public support.





# The takeover winners and losers

## £12m for Cadbury's boss as workers face job losses

Todd Stitzer, CEO of Cadbury's, looks to gain £12,000,000 from the recent sale of Cadbury's to American food conglomerate Kraft. Roger Carr, the company Chairman, admitted that job losses were inevitable. He acknowledged that he had put shareholder interests first but insisted "We have done nothing wrong. We have done the role that is required of us." Carr, who previously sold Thames Water to German group GWE, acknowledged that the deal was "bittersweet".

The main beneficiaries of the deal are the Cadbury executive, Kraft executives, the deal negotiators and hedge funds.

Lawyers, accountants, PR advisers, bankers and other negotiators raked up daily fees of over £2m a day during the negotiation of the takeover. Joe Lampel, professor of strategy at Cass Business School, noted on 18th January that "It is clear that the big winners from the forthcoming Cadbury/Kraft merger are the hedge funds who had plenty

of time to accumulate holdings in Cadbury, and can now realise substantial profits".

The £7bn of capital that Kraft is using to buy out Cadbury has been borrowed on the financial market and is not actually owned by Kraft. Larry Elliot of the *Guardian* writes "The reality is that the takeover of Cadbury has been financed by £7bn of debt, making the confectioner ripe for a bit of what the management gurus call rationalisation but the rest of us call asset-stripping." Jennie Fornby, Unite national officer for food and retail sector, says "This is a leveraged bid and Kraft will eventually have to repay the debt, meaning a great deal of uncertainty for the workforce in the UK and Ireland".

Unite has argued that the workers were sold out. Fornby says "The City boys and hedge funds are only interested in turning a quick profit and care nothing for the people or communities of Cadbury". She said the union has been "bombarded" with supportive messages from members of the public. But Unite has failed to go any further than lobbying parliament and writing a letter to Cadbury's shareholders urging them to reject Kraft's £11.9bn offer for the confectionery firm.

Gordon Brown has said "We are determined that the levels of investment that take place in Cadbury in the United Kingdom are maintained and we are determined that, at a time when people are worried about their jobs, that jobs in Cadbury can be secure". However, this determination is largely meaningless as the PM has no way of following through on this and Peter Mandelson, the business secretary, has rejected the idea that the workers matter in this equation. He stated that he had "always made clear that the decision would be one for the shareholders of Cadbury". The opposition bench is, needless to say, singing from the same hymn sheet. "Ultimately this is a matter for Cadbury's shareholders" according to Ken Clarke, the Conservative shadow business secretary. While Tory MP Bill Wiggin described the workers who now face a very uncertain future as 'whingeing'. Bill Wiggin said on BBC Hereford and Worcester: "Who wants to hire a whingeing workforce when you can have a positive upbeat one".

6,200 workers in Britain and Ireland are employed by Cadbury's.

## Life's too short to be controlled

London No Borders group executed an audacious 'Life's too short to be controlled' march through the streets of the capital, organising two demonstrations on the same day against immigration control and surveillance control, both inextricably linked to the forces of the state and the freedom of movement.

Over 150 people, including bike sound-systems, a samba band and a plethora of colourful banners and flags met at St Pancras

station on Saturday 23rd January for a rally against border controls. St Pancras is officially designated as a UK border control; it also has a detention holding facilities for migrants arriving on the Eurostar. There are 10 immigration removal centres operating in England, and one in Scotland, eight of which operate under contract from the private sector. According to official figures more than 400 children being locked up, with their families, at any one time.

After several speeches the demonstration took the road, stopping traffic, and marching down to Piccadilly Circus in the heart of the West End and home of CCTV surveillance headquarters, where millions of Londoners are watched daily by over 10,000 cameras operating in the city at a cost of £200m. Hundreds of leaflets were given out to passers-by and there was minimal interference from the police.

See photographs of the day at [freedompress.org.uk](http://freedompress.org.uk)



## ANALYSIS

# The Italian prison crisis

The year of 2009 was a particularly bad one for the Italian prison system, especially if you happened to be one of its 'guests' having to suffer the severe overcrowding that was exacerbated by an overall lack of funding in the system. As a result, the summer saw a series of prison protests, including mass hunger strikes and riots (see *Freedom* 7018, 26th September 2009), as well as an explosion in a historically already high rate of suicide, self-harm and other 'suspicious' deaths (see *Freedom* 7022, 21st November 2009).

This overcrowding crisis means that the prison population currently stand at 64,910, its highest level since 1946, a population housed in jails built for only 43,480. The most obvious effect of this overcrowding is on the suicide rate. In the decade 2000–09, there were 1,568 deaths, 565 (36%) of which were suicides (with 12 times that number of attempted suicides). Last year there were 174 deaths in Italian prisons, of which 72 (41%) were classified as suicide. That is 27% higher than the average for the previous decade, against a 10% for the overall death rate. This is the highest suicide rate since 2001 (12.11 per 10,000 versus 12.52), and by far the highest number for more than 20 years. It is also the highest in Western Europe apart from France, Luxembourg and Switzerland! And just to reinforce the dangers of being a prisoner in Italy, in the first two weeks of 2010 there have already been five suicides.

The initial response of the Italian government to the unrest last summer was to announce a series of draft emergency plans last August. These plans have now come to fruition with the announcement of a year-long state of emergency throughout



Franco Ionta, head of the Department of Prison Administration

the Italian prison system. Presented to the Council of Ministers on the 12th January by Justice Minister Angelino Alfano, there are four elements to these plans:

- the building of 47 new prison wings, largely using private investment, creating 21,749 new beds and bringing the prison capacity up to 80,000;
- to amend Article 385 of the Penal Code and bring in home detention for those with less than a year to serve on their sentences (estimates put this at 32% of the current prison population) and 'community service' for those sentenced to less than three years;
- 2,000 new prison officers;
- an extension to the powers already granted to Franco Ionta, head of the DAP (Department of Prison Administration) as special commissioner for prison construction. This means that he will be able to summarily decide on all contracts involved in the new 600 million Euro building scheme, answerable only to Berlusconi himself. Planning will be simplified and projects will follow the pattern of 24 hour working followed in the aftermath of the L'Aquila earthquake.

Needless to say the plans have not been universally popular. During the debate there was a demonstration by public sector unions outside the Italian parliament organised by UILPA Prisons (Italian Workers' Union – Civil Servants section), OSAPP (Autonomous Union of Penitentiary Police), FP-CGIL (Civil Servants section of the Italian General Confederation of Labour) and SIDIPE (Union of Prison Directors and Officers). FP-CGIL, UILPA, RdB (Rank & File Union) and FLP (Federation of Public Workers & Functionaries) have also declared a strike by

judicial workers for 5th February in opposition to the plans.

The PSD (Party of Security and Defence Professionals – effectively the military's trade union even though they are banned from joining unions) has claimed that no new building scheme is needed as there are already 40 prisons standing empty across Italy. Some, like San Valentino (Pescara) and Arghilla (Reggio Calabria), have never been occupied. Others, such as Morcone (Benevento), are standing empty after extensive refurbishment.

The government's scheme has also been denounced by prisoner support groups such as Antigone and Hands Off Cain, and the opposition PD (Democratic Party) have introduced a counter-motion declaring that the whole judicial system is broken and building new prisons is not the solution. They point out, amongst other things, that 50% of all prisoners are currently on remand and 30% will be inevitably have the charges against them dismissed. Other have pointed out that the government's anti-immigration policies and the general racism in Italian society means that 37% of the prison population are foreign prisoners, where as only 6.5% of the total population are foreign nationals.

Inevitably criticism has also focused on the role and powers of Franco Ionta and the potential for corruption given the sweeping powers that have been invested in him, under the direct supervision of il Duce Berlusconi himself. Given the government's professed anti-mafia/anti-corruption stance, it is to be seen whether the financial corruption alleged to have occurred around the L'Aquila projects will be repeated with the prison building schemes.



San Vittore prison in Milan



## IN BRIEF

**SEA ICE:** We're pleased to report that Cryosphere Today has upgraded their website with excellent easy to follow graphs of sea ice extent. It's less pleasing to report that in the Arctic there are 900,000 square kilometers less ice than is normal for this time of year. As with last year we will be following this regularly as part of monitoring the effects of climate change.

**JAIL:** The latest estimates for the cost of rebuilding the three-quarters of the 619-capacity, Category C Ashwell Prison, near Oakham, Rutland, now exceeds £800,000. And this figure only covers the cost of refurbishing the offender management unit, where the probation service operates, and the gym, together with £4,300 compensation for damaged prisoners' and screws' property.

The majority of the prison – the older part that housed 425 prisoners and originally built for the then Cat D open prison – was almost completely destroyed by fire and is currently not being rebuilt until a decision is made on the prison's future. Options include leaving the decision up to the next government or even converting the prison into yet another immigration detention centre.

**MORE JAIL:** A killer serving a life sentence in America has lost a lengthy legal battle to be allowed to play 'Dungeons & Dragons' in prison – on the grounds that it promotes 'gang activity'.

Dungeons & Dragons apparently 'promotes fantasy role playing, competitive hostility, violence, addictive escape behaviours, and possible gambling.' Um, okay.

Inmate Kevin T. Singer had filed a federal lawsuit against officials at Wisconsin's Waupun prison, arguing that a policy banning all 'Dungeons & Dragons' material violated his free speech and due process rights.

Prison officials instigated the ban on the fantasy role-playing game after concerns that playing the game promoted gang-related activity and was a threat to security. After the ban went into effect, prison officials confiscated dozens of 'Dungeons & Dragons' books and magazines from his cell, as well as a 96-page manuscript he had written detailing a potential scenario for the game that players could act out.

The prison later developed a more comprehensive policy against all types of fantasy games, the court said.

**WAR:** UK and other Nato troops are to launch an offensive to take back areas of southern Afghanistan, according to the British general in charge of forces there.

Major General (sounds good but two ranks lower than just 'General') Nick Carter said the operation would "assert the control" of the Afghan government in parts of Helmand now controlled by the Taliban. There have been 251 UK service member deaths in Afghanistan since 2001.

# Don't blame God

It is customary for journalists after a disaster such as the Haitian earthquake (pictured below) to ask of significant clerics: 'Where was God?' and for the clerics to waffle in embarrassment as they fail to provide an answer in which even they can believe. So how does an anarchist, who is almost bound to be an atheist, answer? I suggest thus: God was sitting watching, holding his head in his hands, saying: It didn't have to be like this.

Remember that the God in whom I disbelieve created Adam and Eve and set them, naked and content, in the Garden of Eden. Along with the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, he also gave them free will, as he was bound to – man without free will would be no different from an animal (and none the worse for that, just different). And that is the problem.

For residents of Eden, free will was a paradox: Adam and Eve were freely obedient to the will of God. Until the last moment, they could do no other, and freely chose so to do! But since free will cannot, by definition, be limited, something was bound to happen, and it did – they chose to disobey God and eat the apple. For reasons which make little sense to me, he punished them by sending them to wander in the world. In Eden, free will was not an issue until they exercised it! In the real world of bad weather and famine it was essential, for it is through the continual exercise of our will that we survive.

What is curious is that from the start we did not organise our new, social life – having proved highly fecund – to make things easy and secure. Instead we fought over property, exploited the earth and all that dwell therein, set up hierarchical societies, wasted our strength on things like the tower of Babel, went to war and created civilisations. Ultimately, we built cities in earthquake zones, settled close to the unpredictable sea, lived in over-crowded slums and, to complete God's bafflement, indulged in the slave trade, genocide and mass slaughter.

God, when he was busy creating, knew that rivers flood and rocks fall, that earthquakes and tsunamis happen, that tigers are dangerous and snakes are deadly. He made an internally consistent universe subject to natural law with a people endowed with reason and free will who could dodge rocks and avoid tigers and learn how to live safely

and sensibly. We, in our freedom, chose otherwise. God isn't to blame for our stupidity and suffering – we are.

Let us dispense with God. The anarchist Garden of Eden was the time when *homo sapiens* lived simply in small hunter-gatherer groups. Free will was again limited in practice since people could not but live a traditional life of routine – they freely chose what was necessary for the common good. There was sufficient food, little risk of shortage and no hierarchy to impose laws on underlings – they 'ruled' themselves since, without the fear of scarcity, there was no rhyme nor reason for a controlling elite. The people were egalitarian and conformist.

There were dangers in the world but we could learn, prepare and organise to avoid them or minimise their impact.

That was before the secular 'Fall' which for Rousseau, Marx and most anarchists was the institution of private property, also known as civilisation. That set man against man (and over women), created scarcity out of abundance, and made life, as Hobbes said, "nasty, brutish and short". Hunter-gatherer communism was replaced by oppressive societies in which the great majority of peoples were forced, blackmailed or bamboozled into various forms of slavery to maintain the power and wealth of the elites.

We were not free to choose to live wisely and safely – we went where the boss directed, lived in jerry-built houses in over-crowded slums, farmed on the slopes of live volcanoes or beside dangerous waters. We learned, like Adam, to get our bread by sweat and toil.

Our freedom was, and is, reduced to making the best of a bad job in conditions we did not choose. The people of Haiti – being among the least free in the world – are among the poorest, their lives the most squalid and the impact of disaster the most dreadful.

Anarchists look at Haiti and neither see, nor see the need for, God. We know that the state of the world is not due to original sin – our disasters result from the will of governments, bankers, giant corporations, fat cats and crooks. The suffering and death in Haiti are on their heads. They have stolen our freedom and God's children, aka the toiling masses, are the victims. It doesn't have to be like this.

Richard Frost





## INTERNATIONAL

## IN BRIEF

**EL SALVADOR:** On 26th December, Dora Alicia Recinos Sorto became the third victim of a wave of violence against environmental campaigners in the Cabañas Region of El Salvador, where community members are protesting against the re-opening of a Gold Mine by Canadian Company Pacific Rim. She was eight months pregnant when she was shot dead, and her two year old son was also wounded.

**GERMANY:** It has emerged that the German government has allocated two million euros over and above its usual black ops budget to try and undermine the country's far left. Intelligence organisations have estimated there are around 6,600 anarchists in Germany.

**GREECE:** A farmers' mobilisation across the country has brought Greece to a standstill. The farmers seem to be unafraid of any threats of legal measures against their action. They are demanding a guaranteed income, compensation for income losses, a return of VAT and the special petrol tax, as well as the abolishing of the distinction between first and second line farmers.

**GREECE:** The trial over the killing of Alexandros Grigoropoulos, which led to the Greek riots of 2008, has opened in the remote town of Amfissa. It began with defence lawyer Mr Kougiaris attempting to portray the dead boy as an associate of hooligans, which the court has declared it is reluctant to accept. The courts were guarded by strong police forces at gunpoint.

**IVORY COAST:** An Ivorian court has decided to transfer \$45 million intended for the victims of the Trafigura toxic waste disaster to a group falsely claiming to represent them. In late 2009, a group known as the National Coordination of Toxic Waste Victims of Côte d'Ivoire (CNVDT-CI) claimed that it represented some 30,000 victims who had brought a court case against Trafigura in the UK. All of the claimants in the case were actually represented by UK lawyer Martyn Day of Leigh Day & Co.

**POLAND:** A group of tenants have occupied the local housing authority in Warsaw, demanding that the city ends plans to turn off their gas. Over 100 families say they're being harassed by the city using slumlord tactics to try and get rid of the tenants who happen to live in public housing in an attractive and expensive area of Warsaw. Twenty people have also been on hunger strike.

**MEXICO:** The Mexican authorities are failing to protect human rights activists from murder and life-threatening attacks and harassment, warns Amnesty International. The report describes over 15 cases of defenders who have suffered death, attacks, harassment, threats and imprisonment on fabricated charges between 2007 and 2009 to prevent them from doing their work.

## LENS CAP BERLIN



FAU protesters fly banners in protest at attempts by the Babylon Cinema in Berlin to use the courts to ban their union there. Earlier this month the management of cinema Babylon Mitte filed for a "harsh disciplinary fee or arrest for disobedience to court orders to be carried out against the ... secretaries" of FAU Berlin. Last year FAU Berlin was banned from using industrial action by court order and had finally been deprived the right to call itself a 'union' or a 'grass-root union'. According to the complainant FAU Berlin contravened those court orders. The punishment might be a disciplinary fee of up to 250,000 euros (£219,000) or six months in jail for disobedience to court orders.

## Concern for antifascists in Russia

A major series of solidarity demonstrations with the hard-pressed antifascist movement in Russia have taken place right across Europe – with the exception of St Petersburg, where a planned protest was attacked by plainclothes police and four arrested.

Actions were organised in 30 cities on 19th January in what has been called the biggest manifestation to support Russian antifascism of recent times. The day of action came after the recent murder of a Ghanaian man in St Petersburg. Solomon Attengo Gwajio, 25, was stabbed to death near his home on Prospekt Veteranov in the southwest of the city on Christmas Day. On New Year's Eve a video allegedly depicting his murder was uploaded to a nationalist website. Police stopped a demonstration in the central Nevsky Prospekt

metro station as they had advance warning.

Protests against fascist violence and in memory of the human rights lawyer Stanislav Markelov and journalist Anastasia Baburova, who were shot to death in Moscow in January 2009, were also curbed by the authorities.

Meanwhile a much-publicised anti-fascist rally in Moscow on 19th January, which was partly authorised after an initial ban, drew an estimated 1,000 people. Dozens of detentions were reported.

Russian activists say the authorities ban anti-fascist protests because those in power benefit from nationalism. One said: "We believe that it is the authorities who profit most from fascism, because it divides society and prevents people from trying to solve society's problems."

## Notes from the United States

The Yes Men are renowned for their pointed hoaxes which typically involve activists posing as members of corporations or governments.

On their behalf, they very publicly claim a reversal of an abusive or destructive policy. As the actions are inevitably revealed as hoaxes, the objects of the Yes Men's press conferences or releases are forced into admitting that they have no intention of doing the right thing.

To draw attention to Canada's appalling record of environmental destruction, two websites, 'enviro-canada.ca' and 'ec-gc.ca'

were set up in January. They 'announced' a reversal on the Canadian petroleum industry's highly-damaging tar sands projects.

In response, the Canadian government obliged the German ISP (Internet Service Provider), Serverloft, to take the sites down. This had the side effect of also removing 4,500 unconnected sites in the process.

Over-reaching themselves even further, the Canadian government organisation, Environment Canada, also insisted in an email that the ISP should: "make every effort to prevent



# A grand Haiti debt trick

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Duvalier dictatorship in the 1950–80s on the condition of economic policies which have driven a \$120m annual increase in new debt – in a country where the average daily wage is \$0.50 per person.

Concerns over the long-term future of the country have been paralleled over recent weeks by the US militarisation of the earthquake zone and ‘jostling, preening’ attitudes of many aid groups on the ground.

Tens of thousands more may die because of a number of mistakes and self-centred actions by nations and non-government organisations (NGOs), according to reports from the *Lancet* magazine and Medecins Sans Frontieres.

Among these are:

- The slow response of US aid despite its proximity to the disaster zone – Iceland managed to get specialist teams into Haiti within hours despite being 5,300km further away.
- The response, on arrival, consisting of a takeover of the sole operating airport and denial of landings for medical equipment, water sanitation equipment and other aid from France, Argentina, Mexico and Peru.
- A focus on headline-grabbing rubble searches to the detriment of injured people, potentially leading to thousands more deaths than if sanitation and medical supplies had been prioritised.
- The portrayal of Haitians as ‘looters and gangs’ by international government and media sources despite reports from figures as diverse as US General Ken Keen, Medecins Sans Frontieres personnel and workers in



US soldiers in Port-au-Prince

Port-au-Prince that crime was lower than pre-quake and mostly restricted to taking vital supplies.

The *Lancet* medical journal has been particularly scathing, noting in an editorial that the major players were “jostling for position, each claiming they are doing the best for earthquake survivors. In fact, the situation in Haiti is chaotic, devastating, and anything but co-ordinated”.

Criticism has also been reserved for the

callous response from influential sections of the US right, particularly the neoliberal Heritage Foundation think tank, which noted: “The US response to the tragic earthquake in Haiti offers opportunities to re-shape Haiti’s long-dysfunctional government and economy”.

This missive was swiftly followed by a bid from corporate construction and security provision alliance the IPOA for reconstruction contracts.

## Notes from the Unites States

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any further attempts concerning other environment-related domains (enviro, ec-gc, etc.) originating from your servers.” Also involved in the action with the Yes Men was the Climate Debt Agents of Action Aid.

In the United States itself – under 5% of the world’s population but responsible for 25% of all emissions – has categorically rejected calls for the payment of climate reparations to poorer countries.

The US negotiator at the recent Copenhagen climate conference said, “We absolutely recognise our historic role in putting the emissions in the atmosphere up there that are ... there now. But the sense of guilt or culpability or reparations, I just categorically reject that.”

In the US itself, the architects of the main Senate climate and energy bills unveiled new, weaker, proposals. The ostensible aim: to attract Republican support.

Senators John Kerry (D), Lindsey Graham (R) and Joe Lieberman (Independent) released

a new framework; it would reduce US emissions cuts to 17% of 2005 levels; this is down from 20% in the original bill by Kerry and Democratic Senator Barbara Boxer.

Taking the levels in 1990 used by the rest of the world as a benchmark, that 17% would represent just a 4% reduction – if passed. The new Senate framework also includes significant financial incentives for nuclear power plants and expanded opportunities for offshore drilling.

Finally, the Department of Homeland Security has at last acknowledged that it had several times improperly gathered information on US citizens and residents.

In 2007 Homeland Security officials, for example, distributed a report on the Nation of Islam to hundreds of law enforcement officers throughout the country nation-wide. The report was later withdrawn after a review found that there was no evidence suggesting that the group had advocated or carried out violence.

Louis Further

## Notes on Haiti

At the centre of the Haitian crisis is the US response. *Freedom*’s US correspondent explains the situation.

“The average American is generous and caring in their response to the earthquake in Haiti on 12th January. But this is in massive ignorance of the wider picture. The coverage by the mainstream propaganda outlets has been predictable: natural disaster... nothing could have prevented it... unstable, poor black country... (hence) need for security. Some right-wing and fundamentalist sources have attributed (and implicitly justified) Haitians’ suffering to their ‘pact with the devil’.

“Just as revealing of the callousness and greed of the American corporate state is the story not told on television, radio and in the press: how the US has systematically destroyed the Haitian country physically, culturally and economically for over a century. And is now mounting an occupation – at least 12,000 American troops are thought to be roaming the country – to try and finish the country off.”



## FEATURE

# Forging an election strategy

**On the outside chance you haven't heard there will be a General Election in 2010. Yep, that's this year. The last date that the election can be held is Thursday 3rd June, but the smart money is on 6th May. Whenever it comes it will re-open the debate for how we should react to it.**

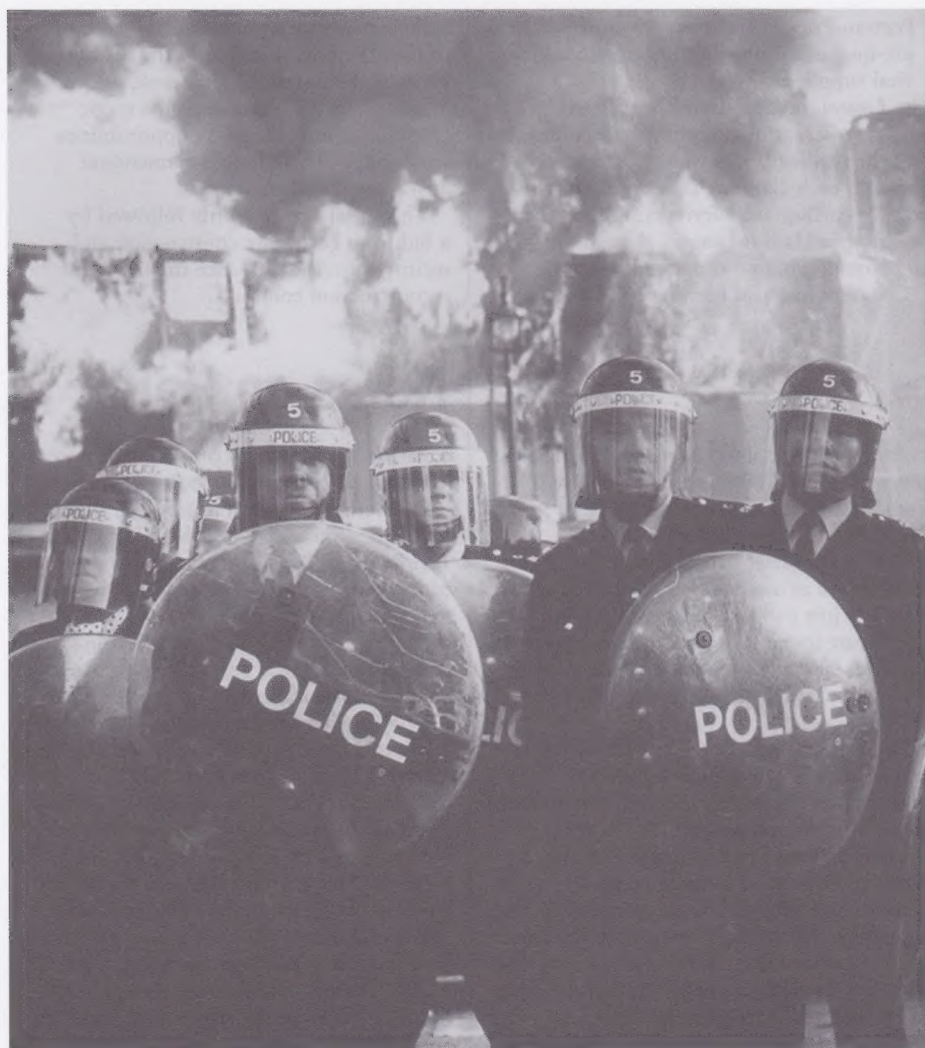
Elections are both problems and opportunities for anarchists. It's the one time that get much of the public interested in the political system and therefore open to different ideas, but it also paints anarchism in a negative light – 'if you don't vote you can't complain'. We're

not pretentious enough to attempt to resolve these long-standing difficulties, but we hope to be part of the debate and to facilitate direct action.

With this in mind it was very positive that the *Freedom* editors were invited to a London Meeting to discuss election strategy. Hosted by the Class War Federation, it included people from diverse aspects of the anarchist movement and beyond and was marked by a willingness to concentrate on how we could work together rather than nit-pick over our differences. While most of the ideas discussed were London based, because of the capital-based political geography of the State, hopefully they will be but part of a nationwide campaign.

## Pre planning: poll tax commemoration

In the run up to the election we aim to highlight both how irrelevant electoral politics are and how effective direct action can be. One idea is the 'March on Goldsmith' scheduled for 20th March proclaiming that we are all 'non-doms' now. Another is that 31st March is the twentieth anniversary of the poll tax demonstration (pictured below)



that was violently attacked by the police. To commemorate this there will be a rally in Trafalgar Square at 3pm. Come prepared to give a speech as there will opportunities for everyone to address the mob – direct democracy in action. Also Whitechapel Anarchist Group will be holding a culture day to build up momentum and spread the word of the radical alternatives to government.

## On the day the election is called

The plan is to kick start the campaign by going to St Stephens Green on the day Gordon Brown 'goes to the palace'. Lots of MPs will be there outside the Houses of Parliament giving interviews and generally hobnobbing with journos. A positive intervention by the public who these fat cats claim to serve should have them scurrying for cover and get libertarian politics on the news agenda.

In the evening the first strategy meeting of our campaign will be held at the Royal Festival Hall on the south bank at 7pm. Regular meetings will follow throughout the campaign, backed up by a phone tree and



## FEATURE



yet more modern forms interwebnet based communication that will allow comrades to keep up with movements of party leaders and other parasites as they wend their way around the country trying to fool the good folk of the nation to put up with their thieving ways for another five years.

There have been anarchist campaigns in the past, such as the oft revived Anti-Election Alliance, but much has failed to be achieved as we have not come to agreement on our political stance. Hence, let a thousand flowers bloom! No we haven't all become Maoists. The central committee agreed that there would be no central committee and that a diversity of tactics were what was needed to keep the forces of reaction on the back foot. However that did not mean that there are not ideas afoot. Some are obvious, such as redecoration of billboards and heckling of candidates, some new, such as intervening in the televised debates.

#### The morning after

Whoever wins the election, in this case David Cameron, they will arrive at Downing

Street the next day to receive the acclaim of their supporters and promise a better world for everybody. It was proposed that as many comrades as possible attend this event to remind the triumphal general that he is still mortal and his planned attacks on the working class will be resisted.

After the election, as incoming politicians are fond of telling us, the real work begins. Only for us it is building working class power in our communities and workplaces that can be an real alternative to the state.

#### More to come

One meeting is not everything and other groupings will doubtless be putting together their own schemes. For instance, we look forward with anticipation to what Climate Camp has to offer and, as we go to press, we see that the Election Meltdown group are planning a Mayday Carnival at 2.30pm in Parliament Square with the party leaders being dragged to their executions in old fashioned style. The Carnival parade starting points are:

- Silver Horse drags Cameron from Conservative Party HQ, Millbank Tower

at 2pm.

- Red Horse drags Brown from Labour Party HQ, 39 Victoria Street, at 2pm.
- Green Horse drags Clegg from Lib Dem HQ, 4 Cowley Street, at 2pm.
- Black Horse drags Griffin from Clerkenwell Green at 1pm.

### ELECTIONS YEAR 1964

In a moment of reflection, we thought we'd dig out some choice quotes from *Freedom* from 1964. Gathered in a neat volume called *Elections Year* and still available (for only £5). For the benefit of younger readers, there are great similarities between 1964 and 2010 in electoral terms. A party in power for 13 years that had come into office promising to be radically different but adopting the policies of its predecessor. A Prime Minister who hadn't won a general election and had been chosen to lead his party without an election either. An Oxbridge-educated opposition leader younger and smarmier than his opponent. But more than this, the underlying inability of parliamentary democracy to represent the real interests of non-politicians is what makes the words written in *Freedom* in 1964 ring true today. So here are two snippets from way back in the day.

The Futility of Voting Labour, 21st March 1964:

"It is significant that only the enemies of the Labour Party (e.g. the *Daily Express*) consistently call them socialists. They themselves shy off the title. Indeed it would seem that if it was 'Socialism' (whatever that is) that one wanted to see in practice, the Labour Party would be the last party to vote for... This unhappy chronicle of failure in international affairs was only surpassed by the sad saga of home affairs... But why go on? Indeed why repeat the whole sad sorry story by voting Labour again."

Politics Corrupts, 27th June 1964: "With the General Elections little more than three months away, the two major political parties are desperately trying to persuade the public that there are fundamental differences in their respective programmes... Just as by changing the manager of a butcher's shop you will never have a 'health store' dreamed of by the vegetarians, so by changing the personnel of government or Parliament you cannot abolish capitalism or privilege... All this does not surprise us: we refer to it because it seems to us to illustrate the point anarchists make against parliamentary socialists, that it is the nature of the governmental machine which shapes those who seek to use it and not vice versa. You cannot abolish the injustices that exist in societies based on privilege without abolishing the instrument through which that privilege is exercised. And that instrument is government."



## COMMENT

## ABOUT FREEDOM

## ANGEL ALLEY

As our visitors will have seen, progress has not been as rapid as anticipated over the new year break. But huzzah, we now have a hand basin and new toilet and the normal standards of privacy have been restored in that area.

Major work continues on the shop and in the autonomy club, so be prepared for many more stunning improvements on the horizon.

We can also flag up the plan to have rotating art displays in the building. Hopefully these will be starting in April with some of Donald Room's wildcat cartoons – what else.

Louise de Golderine, co-ordinator of the Angel Alley rat collective, wishes us to point out that supplies of carelessly discarded food and rubbish are at a very low ebb and urges comrades to forsake the path of cleanliness and hygiene forthwith.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

This is the time of year when many of your subscriptions to *Freedom* are due for renewal. To work out if yours is one of them, look at the number above your name on the address label. This issue is vol 71, no 02, so if your subscription runs out with this issue you'll have 7102 above your name. If the number is 7102 or less, then your subscription is now due for renewal. See page 16 for the current rates and a renewal form or, if you don't want to worry in the future about remembering to renew your subscription to *Freedom*, just ask us to send you a standing order form by emailing [subs@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:subs@freedompress.org.uk) or you can write to us at 'Subscriptions', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX. We've finally got the website sorted out so you can now renew online as well at [freedompress.org.uk](http://freedompress.org.uk).

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## NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 13th February 2010 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 4th February. You can send your articles to us by email to [copy@freedompress.org.uk](mailto:copy@freedompress.org.uk) or by post addressed to 'The Editors', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

## A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

A little bit of snow certainly brings out the moaning. There are plenty of unfavourable comparisons to be had with other countries for a start.

A woman from Liechtenstein told someone in the school playground that we should all have snow boots like they do. Hmm, perhaps if we were all wealthy through money-laundering we could afford to buy an expensive item only used for a couple of days a year. We are told that all across the rest of the northern hemisphere, economies function after much heavier snowfall. Yes, they do, but that's because the snowfall is more regular and predictable so they can gear up for it. Northern Sweden, Norway and Finland are all pretty much guaranteed snow and ice, often for months on end. Their homes are designed for it, their infrastructure is, and they have services ready to deal with extreme winters. It doesn't mean they make it to work every day, though. In some US states, there are even special snow days, allocated to schools so that they can close if the weather is too bad. If they close for more, they have to make the time up.

Here, most local authorities had six days worth of road salt. In most years of my life this would have sufficed. Knowing how local councils operate, they will look at this decision again and see if they need more salt, or specialist equipment like snow ploughs. Some of them will buy such things, then, in a year or so when the snow has been forgotten and the annual cuts are made, they will get rid of them again.

There is little point in planning for extreme conditions as if they were regular.

And what about the obsession with the loss to the 'economy', usually enumerated in

unlikely billions of pounds. So, billions were lost by commuters being stuck at home, either through the affects on transport or because the schools were closed. No one adds up all the equally theoretical benefits to the economy. Some parents played with their children, showing them some worth and improving their self-esteem. Tens of thousands of over-pressurised children got a chance to sledge and throw snowballs, easing their stress by having fun. Or is having fun only allowed when someone's making a profit? Well, in that case, boom times for those in the winter clothing and sledge-making business. And think of the incalculable worth of the wisdom passed on when it snows – from your mum telling you not to make snowballs with yellow snow, to the small child who said "at least you can see the dog poo better and miss it".

Yes, some people were injured and others greatly inconvenienced. But that's life, and we can't live our lives wrapped in cotton wool. My funniest snow moment came when a loud-mouthed racist was inching along the snow, down the hill. He was loudly declaiming that it was outrageous that the council hadn't gritted the paths on the side street he'd just walked along. Apparently, it was because all the salt had been earmarked for Asian areas in East London. Ignorance compounded by stupidity – never once was there any acknowledgement that if you go out in the snow and ice, you might slip over. Nor is it anyone's fault. It is also unrealistic to expect every path and road to be gritted, particularly as the snow on that day was gone by late afternoon. But then someone would need to pay, and I can't imagine anyone being happy with that.



A group of policemen sledging on their riot shields at Boars Hill in Oxford during the recent snow. They were later reprimanded after footage appeared on YouTube.



## EDITORIAL

## Spending a penny

I cannot agree with Eric Blair's letter (19th December 2009). Learned papers showing that anarchism is intellectually respectable, graffiti and scruffy leaflets inciting disobedience and defiance, calls for organisation against coercive institutions, involvement in single-issue campaigns compatible with anarchism – all are valid contributions towards freedom, suitable to different temperaments. So long as the various groups respect each other, and co-operate at a casual level, all is well.

It is pleasant to have no splits in the movement, arising out of personal jealousies and rivalries, such as have existed in the past. But even when they existed, it is doubtful that they did much harm. Activity increased, as rivals groups competed in being more active than each other, and being active is more useful than being passive.

A united 'militant class force' is useful for those whose aim is to take over the government, but for a movement whose aim is to get rid of governments, scrappy diversity seems more appropriate.

Donald Room

## The last straw

I have been a subscriber to *Freedom* for some 30 years at least, and so it is with sadness that I have decided I no longer want to receive the paper. I still regard myself as a libertarian socialist, and my political position is perhaps best expressed by Adrian

Mitchell: "My brain socialist / My heart anarchist / My eyes pacifist / My blood revolutionary."

Two recent issues of the paper finally made me realise I had enough:

First, on 26th September there was the article by Ian Bone praising the group Os cangaceiros, who apparently join demos armed with "sling-shots, rice flails and an array of martial arts weapons", whilst the header links the group with Mesrine, described by Mo Moseley on page 14 of the same issue as a "loony" who killed "two policemen in Canada ... beat his wife up ... kidnapped and tortured a journalist". What has this thuggery got to do with anarchism?

Second, there was the statement (also in the 26th September issue) in the review of action at the DSEi arms fair, that "Many anti-militarists support armed struggle". They may do, but how are they going to use their arms against the kind of weaponry on sale at the DSEi fair? The idea of armed struggle against the modern state is ludicrous.

The final straw came a few weeks later when I decided to pass round a copy of the 24th October issue, in a WEA class I take on political philosophy, to illustrate anarchism and to demonstrate that it is a live movement. Unfortunately I had not read the copy at that point, but here was a group of "unsuspecting members of the public" from whom I should have hid the paper (quoting your editorial in the same issue!). On page 5 the 'Bookfair Song' with its first line ending "you cunts" caught the eye of a woman in the group. She was, rightly,

shocked and offended and immediately decided she wanted nothing to do with anarchism. How are you going to get anarchism a broader public if you print such sexist, and frankly juvenile, stuff? ("It's the place to settle scores / And we know you're getting yours" and "our scene is not a playground / For wankers to hang out").

So, I have cancelled my standing order (which runs out in the new year). I would be happy to receive a few more issues, partly to see if anyone responds to this letter (assuming you publish it, and I hope you will). I will continue to follow the goings-on in the anarchist movement, and do my best to propagate the positive and constructive aspects of anarchist politics where I can. But *Freedom* is no longer any help to me in doing this.

Ian Pirie

## The pointy heads are coming

The first London Anarchist Studies Network social will be held at Freedom Press on Tuesday 2nd March at 7pm.

This is an opportunity for anarchist students, researchers and anarchist academics living, working or visiting the capital to meet, talk and socialise. Freedom have even agreed to raise the ceiling to ensure all those pointy heads fit in the building!

Bring a bottle and get yourself down to 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.





## GETTING ACTIVE

### PRISON NEWS

The cross-party Justice Committee of the House of Commons appears to be sailing against the prevailing political tide as they published their latest report *Cutting Crime: the Case for Justice Re-investment*. In the report, the MPs argue that it is much more 'cost-effective' to invest in crime prevention and community alternatives to prison sentences rather than continue to build yet more expensive prison places.

The current government's building plans are aimed at a potential prison population in England and Wales of 96,000 by 2014, up from the current maximum Useable Operational Capacity of 86,290; equivalent to 169 per 100,000 people, the highest proportion in Western Europe. Estimated costs for this new building programme is anywhere between £3.2bn and £4.2bn, and given that the average capital build cost per new prison place tripled to £153,000 in the decade to 2008, this is probably an underestimate. On top of that, the running costs for these extra places is estimated at £482m a year, based on the current cost of £40,000 a year to keep someone in prison.

Needless to say, the Ministry of Justice have rejected the findings of the Committee. After all, Jack Straw in his evidence to it claimed that "crime, as measured by the British Crime Survey, has dropped by a third in the last 11 years and the prison population has gone up by a third, and it is not a direct linkage, but I am not in any doubt that it is there and the fact that prison terms have got longer is also a factor." Unfortunately, this is contradicted by evidence from a 2004 Cabinet Office report *Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime* that found that the 22% increase in prison population between 1997 and 2003 was estimated to have reduced crime by around 5% during a period when overall crime fell by 30%. The report concludes: "there is no convincing evidence that further increasing the use of custody would significantly reduce crime".

On the other hand, one would expect the Tories to embrace these ideas, especially as they would potentially cut down on 'large government' and save taxpayers' money. They have already cut their plans to build an extra 5,000 prison places on top of Labour's planned expansion (see *Freedom*, 16th January 2009) but are sticking by their promise to end the early release scheme and to enforce minimum jail terms. Additionally, they have come up with the idea of introducing competition into the prison system, making prison governors responsible for keeping their ex-prisoners out of jail and being paid more for lower 're-offending' rates – an apparently unworkable scheme as prisoners, even those on short sentences, are moved around the prison system so much.

The one group that does stand to lose out if this idea catches on are the large private out-sourcing companies like G4S and Serco, who make a tidy profit out of building and running prisons for the government.



As reported elsewhere in *Freedom*, football fans are becoming more vocal and more militant in their dissent against the corporate take over of the beloved game. The massive explosion in players wages and transfer fees, exorbitant ticket prices, introduction of corporate hospitality sponsorship deals, plus the celebrity lifestyles of the top players and profit-seeking owners who have little or no passion for the game, have all gone to alienate the ordinary fan from the clubs they love, and test their loyalty by still treating them like second class citizens on the terraces. Now, though, there are definable rumbles of discontent amongst the footballing masses who are getting organised.

● One such example of this is the emergence of the **football supporter's trust**. An independent body formed by supporters themselves as a means of having a direct say in the running of their club.

Currently there are around 130 such trusts operating in the league. Most came into being as a response to a financial crisis at their respective clubs, or as part of a grassroots campaign, but all are not-for-profit organisations run by the members themselves.

They work on the principle of one member one vote, and one share per member, ensuring a greater democracy and accountability with every member eligible to stand for election and to vote for a candidate.

● Not surprisingly the biggest trust, with over 38,000 members, is at **Manchester**

**United**. Started as a protest group to stop Rupert Murdoch taking control of the club, it remains today entirely volunteer run with the ultimate objective to secure permanent ownership of United for its supporters.

● One of the earliest supporters trusts was the **Aston Villa** formed in 2001 with the promise in its mission statements is to support grassroots football initiatives in the local community.

● Going a step further **Stockport County Supporters Trust** owns a 98% majority stake in their club making it one of the few football teams owned by its fans. Again a key aim of the trust is to "strengthen the bonds between the club and the community which it serves and to represent the interests of the community in the running of the club".

● Probably the most politically aware, but technically not a supporters trust, the **Spirit of Shankly**, based at Liverpool FC, has been voracious in its support of fans ownership of football clubs.

Calling itself a supporters union, it has been at the forefront of exposing not only failings of the current Liverpool owners, but the very involvement of big business in football.

Proudly quoting Bill Shankly "the socialism I believe in is everybody working for each other, everyone having the share of the rewards. It's the way I see football" on its website it continues to articulate the anger felt by every ordinary football fan about today's game.



# Remembering Harry Järv

This writer discovered the existence of Harry Järv from *Living in Truth* (edited by Jan Vladislav and published by Faber and Faber in 1987), a collection of essays published on the occasion of the award of the Erasmus Prize to Václav Havel, to which he contributed the essay 'Citizen versus state'.

At the end of *Living in Truth* Harry Järv is described thus: "(1921), Swedish writer, critic, essayist and bibliographer, Deputy National Librarian and director of several important literary reviews. He is especially concerned with central and east European culture." This pen-picture is economical however. It omits two other important pieces of information about him: his military heroism and the fact that he was a long-standing anarchist.

Harry Järv was born on 27th March 1921 in a village in Western Finland. Like many of his compatriots in that part of Finland, he spoke Swedish, one of its official languages and a legacy from the time when Finland was once part of Sweden. Harry Järv passed away on Monday, 21st December 2009 after a heart attack. As will be seen from the following account, he had an eventful and distinguished life.

Harry Järv fought with distinction during the Second World War against Russian soldiers as the nominal leader of a Swedish-speaking Finnish army unit which undertook raids and reconnaissance missions behind enemy lines. In recognition of his bravery he was awarded five decorations, becoming, according to one description, 'the most decorated soldier of Finland'. His exploits behind enemy lines ended when, as a consequence of stepping on a land mine, he had to have part of his leg amputated.

Unusually, during active service Harry Järv always carried a camera, with which he took many photographs, which were to prefigure his post-war life. Like many of his compatriots, after the end of the war he emigrated to



Above right, Harry Järv in 2004; below left, Harry Järv as a young man with his camera and trusty KP31 submachine gun.

Sweden, where he became a university student. Initially he studied art history. Then he studied philosophy at Uppsala University, from which he received an honorary doctorate in 1973. In 1958 he began to work in the Royal Library of Sweden, eventually becoming the Deputy Librarian there.

A festschrift published on the occasion of Harry Järv's retirement in 1987 attested to the esteem in which he was held. He had a long and distinguished literary career. He translated many books written by, among other authors, Mallarmé, Pound, Kundera, D.H. Lawrence, T.S. Eliot and Seifert into Swedish. He wrote fifty books of his own as well as many essays about ancient and modern literature, history, culture, history and philosophy, and Kafka, about whom he became an acknowledged expert. And he edited three cultural journals.

In 2000 Harry Järv had his book *Permanent patrullverksamhet* (*Permanent patrol activities*) about his wartime exploits published. We will return to the book shortly. Here we may note that it is based upon the photographs that he took at the time, and that Åke Lindman, the late Finnish film director, used both the text of the book and its photographs as the basis for his film *Framom Främsta Linjen* (*Beyond Enemy Lines*), which he directed with the help of Harry Järv and which was released in 2004.

This obituarist does not speak Swedish and consequently was unfamiliar with the origin and the subsequent development of Harry Järv's anarchism. By Harry Järv's own account, he favoured Kropotkin. By another account he adopted an anarcho-syndicalist outlook. As his former colleague Tomas Lidman (National Librarian of the Royal Library of Sweden) recounted, during the early 1980s, Harry Järv made a brave stand almost alone against charges for library

services, which he described as an abomination that limited freedom of information. He argued that you can't pay twice for the same service, that libraries are not shops that buy and sell goods, but that they should devote themselves to their main task, library work.

Harry Järv wrote *Permanent patrol activities* with the specific purpose of conveying the message that military discipline is unnecessary and, in many cases, dangerous, for example in the particular case of the raids and reconnaissance missions that he and his colleagues undertook. (If he had not read *On the psychology of military incompetence* by Norman F. Dixon, published by Pimlico in 1994, then doubtless he would have appreciated it.) For his exploits Harry Järv rejected military discipline in favour of functional discipline, by which everyone in his unit always knew what to do, how to work together and how to look after each other, which, he tended to be more efficient than larger units that served under military discipline. Occasionally he took liberties, which might explain why he was not awarded the highest military decoration in Finland. For example, because of a shortage of tommy guns, he was ordered by a battalion officer to equip only himself with a gun and to leave his colleagues to fend for themselves with rifles. But, as he recounted, "Of course I let them all take tommy guns".

'Citizen versus state' can be read with profit by current-day anarchists. On page 236 it contains the following timeless observations: "anarchy does not mean chaos but freedom from rulers. Anarchy in its true, etymological sense needs no motivation: it is self-evident. There is no reason of any weight that justifies that one person shall rule over another." This obituarist wishes that he had met Harry Järv.

John Desmond



## REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON  
FEBRUARY

1st J18 and Seattle 1999, reflections and strategies 10 years on – an evening of films and discussion that look back to the global protests of 1999, and consider where next for the movement of movements, and where next for the social revolutionaries, presented by the Bristol Anarchist Bookfair Collective and Bristol Indymedia at the Cube Cinema, 1 Dove Street South, Bristol, BS2 8NQ from 7.30pm, email [bristolanarchistbookfair@riseup.net](mailto:bristolanarchistbookfair@riseup.net)

7th Screening of new film *10 Tactics for Turning Information into Action* at The Common Place, Wharf Street, Leeds LS2 7EQ, at 7pm, see [thecommonplace.org.uk/events-calendar/day.listevents/2010/02/07/](http://thecommonplace.org.uk/events-calendar/day.listevents/2010/02/07/) and [informationactivism.org](http://informationactivism.org)

12th Benefit for Russian anti-fascists – live punk, ska and hip-hop from 6.30pm (£6 on door) at The Croft, 117 Stokes Croft, Bristol BS1, see <http://bristolantifa.org/>

14th Screening of *10 Tactics for Turning Information into Action* 1in12 Club, Albion Street, Bradford BD1 2LY, 5.30pm, see [1in12.com/monthly/day.listevents/2010/02/14/](http://1in12.com/monthly/day.listevents/2010/02/14/) and [informationactivism.org](http://informationactivism.org)

15th Aldermaston Big Blockade: Bikes not Bombs – cyclists and environmentalists will be blockading one of the gates from 7am at Aldermaston, near Reading, at a crucial time for the future of Trident, for details email [info@bikesnotbombs.org.uk](mailto:info@bikesnotbombs.org.uk), see [bikesnotbombs.org.uk](http://bikesnotbombs.org.uk) or, for more general info, see [tridentploughshares.org](http://tridentploughshares.org)

21st Screening of *Cruel and Unusual* at The Common Place, Wharf Street, Leeds LS2 7EQ, at 7pm, see [thecommonplace.org.uk/events-calendar/day.listevents/2010/02/21/](http://thecommonplace.org.uk/events-calendar/day.listevents/2010/02/21/) and [cruelandunusualfilm.com](http://cruelandunusualfilm.com)

22nd Stop the traffic and change the world – create the biggest traffic jam ever, just step outside into your street during the rush hour, for details call 07758668637, email [info@stopthetraffic.info](mailto:info@stopthetraffic.info) or see <http://stopthetraffic.info>

28th Screening of *Cruel and Unusual* at the 1in12 Club, Albion Street, Bradford BD1 2LY, at 5.30pm, see [cruelandunusualfilm.com](http://cruelandunusualfilm.com) and [1in12.com/monthly/day.listevents/2010/02/28/](http://1in12.com/monthly/day.listevents/2010/02/28/) and [cruelandunusualfilm.com](http://cruelandunusualfilm.com)

## MARCH

2nd The first London Anarchist Studies Network social, from 7pm at Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX – an opportunity for anarchist students, researchers and anarchist academics living, working or visiting the capital to meet, talk and socialise. Bring a bottle and get yourself down there.

7th Screening of *Everything's Cool* at The Common Place, Wharf Street, Leeds LS2 7EQ, at 7pm, see [thecommonplace.org.uk/events-calendar/day.listevents/2010/03/07/](http://thecommonplace.org.uk/events-calendar/day.listevents/2010/03/07/) and [everythingscool.org](http://everythingscool.org)

14th Screening of *Everything's Cool* at the 1in12 Club, Albion Street, Bradford BD1 2LY, at 5.30pm, see [1in12.com/monthly/day.listevents/2010/03/14/](http://1in12.com/monthly/day.listevents/2010/03/14/)

## OBITUARY

Anna Mendelssohn died, aged 61, on 15th November after a long illness and her funeral took place with her two daughters and friends in Cambridge on 20th November. Anna was one of the four of the 'Stoke Newington Eight' sentenced to 10 years for the Angry Brigade actions in 1972. After release from jail she gained acclaim for her poetry, writing under the name Grace Lake.

I only knew Anna for a few short months in the summer of 1972 when she and Hilary were granted bail prior to their trial at the Old Bailey. The Anna I knew was a brave, vibrant, beautiful, funny, joyous life affirming woman who knew her activities as a revolutionary were about to get her a very long prison sentence – possibly even life. Despite this it was a hedonistic summer of wine-drinking on the beaches of the Gower – but always surrounded by the foreboding piles of depositions of prosecution evidence. They were defending themselves – an incredibly brave statement considering the severity of the charges – so there were whoops of delight from Anna every time she spotted a disparity in the prosecution evidence. She and Hilary would dance around a smouldering beach fire ember like they'd just found the 'Get out of Jail' card.

The conditions of their bail were that they would not get involved in any political activity or associate with radicals. This was brazenly ignored as coachloads of radical feminists, flour-bombing Miss-World-wrecking women's liberationists, claimants' unionists and anarchist women of every race set up mini tent villages on the Gower – offering some of the best spiritual and physical solidarity it was possible to give. If you'd known Anna and Hilary that summer then you'd know how their bravery and fun inspired such solidarity.

I wrote a piece in *Anarchist* which I think captures the emotional feeling of that time and I can't really better it now: "Vapour trails tracing back to the summer of '72 when Hilary Creek and Anna Mendleson – one quarter of the Stoke Newington Eight – had been bailed for a last glance of freedom for a decade to a blissful Gower summer. Doomed



women facing a life stretch hugging naked on Oxwich beach, kissflicking under broody Swansea rainstorms, waiting for the turnkey's chastity belts. An intensity of repressed desire. Visitors and more visitors from London. Ian Purdie, Darcus Howe, *World in Action* – lolloping with wine bottles and dancing among the depositions as the sea raced in to Three Cliffs Bay. The ever-darkening summer nights as they weaved homewards down the Pennard Castle valley clutching their late night supplies from the Parkmill Happy Shopper. A last summer idyll before the storm would break about their heads. Suspended time, cancer terrorists in remission. Pulses racing as they scrabbled home among the reedy streams and distant headlight beams. Fireflies dancing in the smoke at Rhossili and time closing in with the tide."

*World in Action* filmed an interview with Anna and Hilary (available on Stuart Christie's website) on the back flat roof of my house in Swansea. It was typical of Anna's generosity of spirit that, apart from the agreed transmission date, the only condition she and Hilary insisted on was that me, kids and partner got £50 for use of our electricity.

Thanks Anna, you made some fucking noise. *If you want peace prepare for war.*

Ian Bone

John Barker, one of her co-defendants, paid Anna Mendelssohn this tribute:

"Anna was such a dynamo ... She made a commitment to the life of a poet and mother in which I'm sure she put the same whole-hearted conviction she gave to everything. She had shown this to a 'public audience' when defending herself at the Old Bailey trial which could not be forgotten by anyone who witnessed a political passion without clichés."

## PRIZE CROSSWORD ANSWERS

## Across

1/9 Climate Change Camp, 10 Winstanley, 12 Lottery, 13 Deep-set, 16 Pro, 17 Yield, 18 Lope, 20 Eden, 22 She, 24 Sea, 26 Jess, 28 Espy, 29 Liszt, 31 Orr, 33 Stewart, 36 Housman, 37 Partiality, 38 Jade, 39 Arthur C Clarke.

## Down

2 Limitless, 3 Tricycles, 4 Cased, 5 Abaser, 6 Giles, 7 Scully, 8 Lytton, 11 Deeds, 14 Epee, 15 Poe, 19 Psychotic, 21 Disembark, 23 Herr, 25 Aloud, 26 Joseph, 27 Sow, 30 Tinsel, 32 Rakish, 34 Error, 35 Tyler.

Winners have been notified and received their prizes.

## QUIZ ANSWERS

1. They stopped paying taxes and all semblance of government evaporated.
2. Whiteway, near Stroud in the Cotswolds. It is no longer anarchist, but still functions under a general meeting and

- no one owns the land.
3. Three – there were two Garibaldian socialists and Carlo Terzaghi, who was a police spy.
4. Emma Goldman.



# Souvenirs of war

Tom Jennings is relieved that *The Hurt Locker* avoids lazy liberal moralising in exploring the mundane traumas of courage under fire.

The heart might sink at the prospect of yet another Iraq war film based on a verité account by an embedded journalist, but Kathryn Bigelow's viscerally scintillating *The Hurt Locker* (2008) is distinctive in several respects. While thoroughly and (un)comfortably enjoyable as superior action fodder, it also subtly stylises the dire individual and interpersonal corollaries, even of a military function which seems most humanistic. Her Improvised Explosive Device-disposal squad are at once ordinary and heroic. Veteran communications officer J.T. Sanborn (Anthony Mackie) obsesses about rules to stave off fear, rookie guard Owen Eldridge (Brian Geraghty) maintains alertness via a veritable bundle of neuroses visibly vying for attention, and bomb expert William James (Jeremy Renner) approaches his task with a simultaneously exhilarating and infuriating blend of surgical precision and cowboy bravado after his predecessor has succumbed to the fiendish bogdery of insurgent tactics.

James initially impresses his new colleagues with almost supernatural success. However, his lordly devil-may-care attitude increasingly imperils everyone in the vicinity, and they eventually even contemplate assassinating him to improve their own chances. Superbly rendered set-pieces count down the final month of their tour of duty, stitched together with interludes illustrating their variously vexed relationships with each other, sundry locals and, most tellingly, their lives back home – running a minimal gamut from dreams of hidebound retirement to James' distantiating from his young son



compared to strong affinity with the tragically happy-go-lucky Iraqi spiv dubbed 'Beckham'. The film's title refers to James' secret stash of component souvenirs, metaphorically doubling for the private and public implications of these soldiers' anguish. His arguably necessary recklessness yields an alienated incapacity to appreciate any other kind of social project and a hankering for intensity of experience that can only be interpreted as death-wish – practically guaranteeing that the heights of their specialist training, as well as its failures, produce monsters liable to explode at any moment.

## Improvised Explosive Death-Drive

*The Hurt Locker* was co-produced and scripted by Mark Boal from his 2005 essay 'The Man In The Bomb Suit'. He had already co-written Paul Haggis's *In The Valley of Elah* (2007), fictionalising his earlier *Playboy* feature about a US infantryman murdered after returning from the attack on Baghdad in 2003 – thus showing a particular interest in the effects of modern warfare on those prosecuting it. Such themes lend themselves perfectly to Bigelow's persistent fascination with the psychodynamics of violence, seductively spectacularised in intimate visual flayings of the wayward weaknesses of masculinity – achieved with virtuoso design and editing and vivid, hyperkinetic camerawork in generic subversions such as *Near Dark* (1987), *Blue Steel* (1989), *Point Break* (1991), *Strange Days* (1995) and, least imaginatively, in *K-11: The Widowmaker* (2002).<sup>\*</sup> Now, the realist immediacy of Barry Ackroyd's cinematography, effectively disorienting sound design and characteristically inspired acting, expert

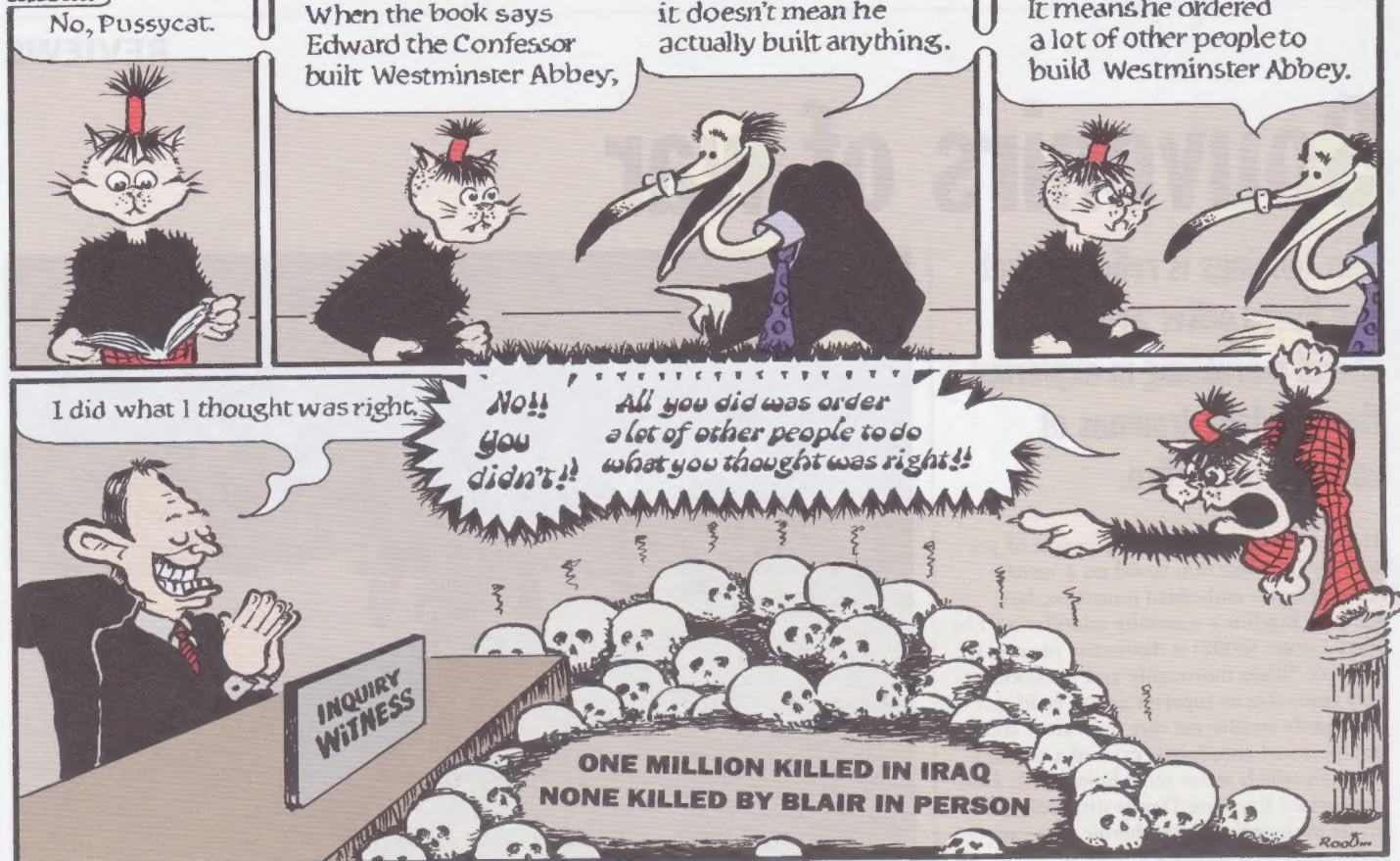
spacing and crafting of atmosphere boil genre clichés of attrition among bands of brothers down to basic elements among those whose work requires them to tolerate the constant threat of imminent mortality.

The director's strategy deconstructs gendered myths and fantasies of macho mastery – specifying, condensing, and twisting the narrative strategies and conventions which sustain them throughout folklore, fairytale, classical art and contemporary media alike. Subsequently, despite focusing on extremes of conduct and context, the outcomes always speak to broader social stereotypes and standards of manly behaviour. And this take on the traditional Hollywood war film is comparably sly, as well as timely – both specifically, given favoured guerilla methods in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in general. As the UN, for example, moves towards a global militarised policing of putatively flawed governance, its footsoldiers become positioned as glorified charity workers (or vice versa, enforcing neoliberal aid arrangements) dispensing the relief of suffering. But this somehow unerringly results in the abjection of bare existence for those lucky enough to survive the beneficent neocolonial onslaught.

That this is no accident is reinforced by the consummate filmmaking here, facilitating the apparently counterintuitive insight that an equivalent existential emptiness already lurks at the core of those charged with the job – let alone 'mission' – of delivering the greater goods. Not that *The Hurt Locker*'s characters, of course, should be considered representative of actual protagonists, when emotional states get artificially segregated into separate psyches







## Review

### ◀ page 15

which would otherwise be expected to conflictually coexist to some degree within all concerned. Whereas the 'humanitarian warrior' is as simple-minded and mendacious a concept as, say, 'ethical capitalism' – both extracting personal value from the objectification of others. Hence the continuing allure of the adrenaline rush of exploitative violent action, where in the real world and the virtual (always an essential training-ground) the boys own adventure mentality privileges the mindless muscularity of paranoid thrills and spills to compensate for the difficult soft complexities of mature human relations. But fetishising the former to hide from the latter leaves a spiritual void

parallel to the narcissistic woundedness of all addictions, including those of narcotic-, testosterone- or money-junkies. *New York Times* correspondent Chris Hedges famously captured the problematic at hand as "War is a drug" and, sure enough, in the film's only hamfisted decision, this epigraph adorns its first frame – thus unfortunately diverting the attention of viewers from manifold more interesting parallels, while doubtless enhancing Oscar odds.

[www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk](http://www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk)  
<http://libcom.org/blog/4271>

\* See, for example, Deborah Jermy & Sean Redmond (eds.) *The Cinema of Kathryn Bigelow: Hollywood Transgressor* (Wallflower Press, 2003).

*The Hurt Locker* is out now on DVD.

## THE QUIZ

1. What happened when William Penn left his Quaker colony in Pennsylvania?
2. What colony established by followers of Tolstoy still exists in England today?
3. In 1872, Bakunin helped organise a congress of the Italian sections of the First International. How many attendees weren't anarchists?
4. Whose father told her "Girls do not have to learn much! All a Jewish daughter needs to know is how to prepare gefilte fish, cut noodles fine, and give the man plenty of children."

Answers on page 14

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# strategy



that was violently attacked by the police. To commemorate this there will be a rally in Trafalgar Square at 3pm. Come prepared to give a speech as there will opportunities for everyone to address the mob – direct democracy in action. Also Whitechapel Anarchist Group will be holding a culture day to build up momentum and spread the word of the radical alternatives to government.

On the day the election is called  
The plan is to kick start the campaign by going to St Stephens Green on the day Gordon Brown 'goes to the palace'. Lots of MPs will be there outside the Houses of Parliament giving interviews and generally hobnobbing with journos. A positive intervention by the public who these fat cats claim to serve should have them scurrying for cover and get libertarian politics on the news agenda.

In the evening the first strategy meeting of our campaign will be held at the Royal Festival Hall on the south bank at 7pm. Regular meetings will follow throughout the campaign, backed up by a phone tree and

yet more modern forms interwebnet based communication that will allow comrades to keep up with movements of party leaders and other parasites as they wend their way around the country trying to fool the good folk of the nation to put up with their thieving ways for another five years.

There have been anarchist campaigns in the past, such as the oft revived Anti-Election Alliance, but much has failed to be achieved as we have not come to agreement on our political stance. Hence, let a thousand flowers bloom! No we haven't all become Maoists. The central committee agreed that there would be no central committee and that a diversity of tactics were what was needed to keep the forces of reaction on the back foot. However that did not mean that there are not ideas afoot. Some are obvious, such as redecoration of billboards and heckling of candidates, some new, such as intervening in the televised debates.

## The morning after

Whoever wins the election, in this case David Cameron, they will arrive at Downing

Street the next day to receive the acclaim of their supporters and promise a better world for everybody. It was proposed that as many comrades as possible attend this event to remind the triumphal general that he is still mortal and his planned attacks on the working class will be resisted.

After the election, as incoming politicians are fond of telling us, the real work begins. Only for us it is building working class power in our communities and workplaces that can be an real alternative to the state.

## More to come

One meeting is not everything and other groupings will doubtless be putting together their own schemes. For instance, we look forward with anticipation to what Climate Camp has to offer and, as we go to press, we see that the Election Meltdown group are planning a Mayday Carnival at 2.30pm in Parliament Square with the party leaders being dragged to their executions in old fashioned style. The Carnival parade starting points are:

- Silver Horse drags Cameron from Conservative Party HQ, Millbank Tower